

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: APRIL 28, 1998

CONTACT: Steven Gold, Deputy City Attorney, Consumer and Environmental Protection Unit, 236-6508

LIDOCAINE INJECTIONS AT HAIR REMOVAL SALON LEAD TO CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS

Lisa Burchard, co-owner of "State of the Art Thermolysis" and "State of the Art Body Care Clinic," was convicted after a plea of no contest today to practicing medicine without a license, under circumstances or conditions which cause or create risk of great bodily harm, serious physical illness, or death. In January, co-owner Yvonne Christina also entered a plea of no contest and was convicted of the same crimes. Defendants administered injections of lidocaine, a local anesthetic, which can result in great bodily injury or death if administered improperly or under unsafe conditions. The Defendants were also convicted of unlawfully possessing hypodermic needles or syringes, and for exceeding the scope of their licensed practice.

"State of the Art Thermolysis" and "State of the Art Body Care Clinic" performed hair removal on customers through a process called thermolysis. Lidocaine is a local anesthetic sometimes injected in the skin with a needle and syringe to reduce pain or discomfort during medical procedures. It is not authorized for use by non-medical personnel, such as these defendants. The case came to the City Attorney's Office through the California Department of Consumer Affairs, Barbering and Cosmetology Program, and the California Medical Board, who conducted the investigations.

Defendants are banned from the practice of thermolysis or any other form of hair removal for at least one year. Other terms of their three year probation include 200 hours of community service and 100 hours of remedial training. Defendant Christina was also ordered to conduct 40 lectures to educate cosmetology and thermology students about the need to know the boundaries of their licenses. Defendant Burchard must distribute 1,000 copies of an approved testimonial, addressing her crimes, to schools throughout California where thermolysis is taught.

Deputy City Attorney Steven Gold, who prosecuted the case, said: "Consumers may take comfort in knowing that our office will -- to the extent we are able -- investigate and, if warranted, prosecute individuals in San Diego who unlawfully place others at risk in performing any medically-related procedure."

#